

we have seen, that there is room for partiality and endless delusion. The conscience, as a divinely appointed arbiter, judges according to truth, and judges not the abstract act, but the agent in the act; and if it judges correctly of the agent, it must take into view his whole moral state and motive.

*As a second general principle, it must be taken into account, that the mental state of the agent cannot be truly good, provided he is in the meantime neglecting a known and manifest duty.* It will not be difficult to establish this principle, which is a necessary consequent of the first; and when admitted, the two include all men under sin.

Take as an illustration, a boy arrived at the age of responsibility, running away from his parents, without provocation of any kind. Very possibly, in the midst of the companions whom he meets with, he may be cheerful, kind, and obliging. Present this disinterested kindness to the moral faculty, and it will approve it as something becoming; and if nothing else is observed, it may seem as if he merited our wannest approbation. But present the whole complex moral state of the boy to the conscience, and the judgment will be instantly reversed. As long as this child is living in neglect of a bounden duty, the moral sense refuses to give a single mark of approval; all his kindness will not draw a single smile of complacency from the rightly constituted mind, till he return to his father's house, and to his proper allegiance.

Analogous instances will present themselves to the reflecting mind. A person, let us suppose, has unjustly got possession of a neighbour's property. It is conceivable, that, having done so, he may be benevolent in the use which he makes of his wealth; his hospitality may be the theme of admiration throughout the whole neighbourhood, and the praise of his charity may be in the mouths of hundreds of the destitute. Now, if this indi-

vidual's original dishonesty is not established on sufficient evidence, we may, in the judgment of charity, give him credit for generosity; but when the whole man is brought under our notice, the mind can give one, and but one judgment, and that is to condemn him, even when he is at the head of his own hospitable board, and scattering his munificence all around him.

Or take the case of a Brazilian sugar-planter fitting out a slave-ship, with instructions to the crew to proceed to the coast.